

Madame Speaker, I rise today, representing the voice of my Vietnamese-American constituency to once again bring attention to the deteriorating human rights situation in Vietnam.

Last Wednesday, a number of Catholics were attacked by the police for reporting an incident where Vietnam government officials destroyed a Holy Cross at the Dong Chiem parish. The removal of the cross was only one incident in a series of violent actions taken by the Vietnamese government to unlawfully seize church property which has belonged to the parish for over 100 years.

I find it absolutely appalling that the Vietnamese government is able to continually get away with such human right violations.

In 2010, I hope the United States will finally take a stand and show the world that it is unacceptable for a government to beat individuals with electric prods and attack them with tear gas for simply exercising their right to freedom of expression and religion.

In 2010, I hope to see my Colleagues fearlessly defend peaceful activists like Le Cong Dinh, who has been charged of capital crime and will most likely be sentenced to death for defending bloggers and free-expression activists.

It is time for Vietnam to be held accountable for their actions and responsible for upholding and protecting basic civil and political liberties.

{wmv}CSPAN VN Catholic Cross{/wmv}